(c) if so, whether Government is considering to dilute/repeal such provisions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Compulsory packaging in jute bags has been provided for only two commodities, *viz.*, foodgrains & sugar and that too for packaging in bags, with weight of 25.00 kgs and above and less than 100.00 kgs. All other commodities may be packed in any other kind of bags. Foodgrains and sugar in bags of weight less than 25.00 kgs and that of 100.00 kgs or more have also been exempted from the reservation. The reservation for jute packaging of foodgrains and sugar only affects the plastic woven sack industries, minimally.

(c) No, Sir.

Schemes for weaver community and handicraft artisan

1391. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of welfare schemes being run for the weaver community and handicraft artisan currently, State-wise;

(b) whether Government has set up any Committee to study the economic backwardness of weavers and handicraft artisans community living in rural and semi urban areas and depending upon traditional occupation/artisanship;

(c) if so, whether the said Committee has submitted its report; and

(d) if so, the findings thereof alongwith the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) At present, Government of India is implementing Integrated Handlooms Development Scheme, Marketing & Export Promotion Programme, Mill Gate Price Scheme, Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme and Diversified Handloom Development Scheme for the welfare of the handloom weavers and overall development of the handloom sector and Handicrafts Artisans Comprehensive Welfare Scheme with the component of (i) the Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana and (ii) the Bima Yojana for the welfare of handicraft artisans.

(b) No such committee has been set up, so far, to study the economic backwardness of weavers and handicraft artisans.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Strategy to improve the conditions of cotton growers in Vidarbha region

1392. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has charted out a strategy to improve the conditions of cotton growers in the Vidarbha Region in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry is also wooing leading Indian and international textile majors, in order to promote fair cotton trade cultivation practices on a contract basis; and

(c) if so, to what extent the strategy has been helpful in improving the conditions of the cotton growers in the Vidarbha Region in Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) The Government of India launched the Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC) in February, 2000 in Ninth Five Year Plan, with the objective of improvement in the production, productivity and quality of cotton and reduction in cost of cultivation, in order to provide abundant supply of good quality cotton at competitive prices to the textile industry and a remunerative return to the farmers. The scheme is functional in Maharashtra State also including Vidarbha region. The mission consists of four mini missions, which are being jointly implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Textiles. Objectives of Mini Missions (MMs) are as under:

(i) Mini Mission I relates to Research and Development on cotton, which strengthen especially on genetic improvement of cotton, cottonseed technology, Resource management for quality cotton production, modernization of cotton cultivation, and post harvest technology. This scheme is being implementing by the Indian Council for Agriculture Research (ICAR).

(ii) Mini Mission II relates to Dissemination of technology to farmers. The main components include production and supply of certified seed of varieties/hybrids, transfer of technology through field demonstration & farmers' training and thereby increasing production and productivity of cotton. The Ministry of Agriculture implements mini mission-II.

(iii) Mini Mission III relates to improvement in marketing infrastructure and includes the revival of dormant market yards, improvement in existing market yards and setting up of new market yards.

(iv) Mini Mission IV arms at modernization of ginning and pressing factories and thereby improving the quality of cotton by reducing contamination ensuring better prices to the growers.

(Ministry of Textiles is the nodal agency for MM-III & MM-IV of TMC which are being implemented through Cotton Corporation of India Ltd., Mumbai)

Constant decline in traditional handloom industry

†1393. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that constant decline in traditional handloom industry sector has been registered resulting in the hardships for the weavers;

(b) if so, the steps taken on the part of Government in order to check this decline in handloom sector;

(c) whether Government has formulated any plan to furnish information to the weavers regarding modern colours, fashions and brand etc. with a view to promote Indian handloom industries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.